

GUIDE

Official Publication of
Catholic Institute for Religious Research

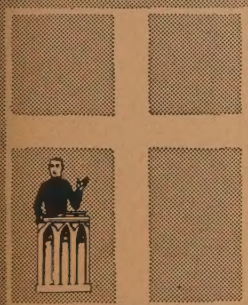
OUR NEW APPROACH TO THE BIBLE

Raymond E. Brown, S.S.

THE CALL TO CONVERSION

EXPLAINING THE MASS

OCTOBER 1962, No. 171



61165
RT. REV. MSGR.
JOSEPH J. MULLEN, STD
1227 ANSEL RD.
CLEVELAND 8, OHIO



IT SEEMS TO ME

Doctrinal Pamphlet Series

Printers at the Paulist Press are working overtime these days turning out a new series of doctrinal pamphlets. A glance at the titles and authors (see p. 15 of this issue of GUIDE) will immediately reveal the timeliness of the subjects treated and the fresh approach employed by the writers.

This inexpensive, beautifully printed set stresses the teachings that are truly central to the Christian Message. They are noticeably free from excessive apologetics and an exclusively scholastic treatment of doctrine. Writers were chosen for their ability to reflect the best insights that have resulted from the doctrinal, biblical, liturgical and catechetical advances of recent years. Those who are convinced that kerygmatic catechetics is here to stay will welcome this series enthusiastically.

At the heart of the strenuous efforts of the Church to make Christ more vitally present to our world is a vigorous renewal in doctrine. Ours is a stirring period in every department of Catholic life and theology shares in this healthy renewal. One would have to go back seven or eight centuries to find a period comparable in vitality and positive advance.

The defensive attitude imposed on us by the Reformation has gradually given more room for a re-examination and intense re-thinking of the content of the Faith. And the valid conclusions of Catholic scholars have resulted in a deeper appreciation of the Christian heritage.

The greatest task facing those in the pastoral ministry is not merely more efficient organization or better apostolic methods or increased external activity. These are all good and essential. But there is a greater need for a more profound understanding of what constitutes the Good News brought to us by Christ. As Father Charles Davis puts it, our primary task is to improve the quality of the faith of our parishioners.

Catholic bookshops and Catholic periodicals have long reflected this shift in doctrinal emphasis. This new pamphlet series should help our pamphlet racks to catch up with this fruitful trend.

JOHN T. MCGINN, C.S.P.

GUIDE, No. 171, October, 1962.

Published 10 times a year (monthly except June-July, August-September when bi-monthly) by The Missionary Society of St. Paul the Apostle in the State of New York, 411 West 59th Street, New York 19, N. Y. Second class postage paid at New York, N. Y. Rates 1 year, \$1.00; 10¢ a copy; 5¢ a copy in bulk to Seminarians.

Our New Approach to the Bible^{*}

Raymond E. Brown, S.S.

That there is something new afoot in Catholic biblical circles is becoming obvious to all: to the hierarchy, to theologians, to priests in the ministry, to teachers, and to the ordinary laity. Some are enthusiastic; some are opposed; some are afraid; and some are just confused. This is not the place, nor do we have the time, to give a complete exposition of what is new in the "new" biblical movement. To its friend and foe alike we give this counsel: read the works of the biblical scholars, their articles and their books, before you either join them or condemn them. They are often poorly reported by their students and disciples; and frequently the report of their ideas which arouses the most ire or the most enthusiasm is something that they never said at all.

In all the discussion of the "new" biblical movement, however, there is one question that does keep coming up, namely, why a new movement? The Christian Church has been in possession of the Bible for nearly two thousand years. Naturally, there are always new insights. But the notion that there can be a new approach to the Bible seems to imply that either the Church has been on the wrong track in the past, or has been neglecting its duty. It is this mistrust of the "newness" of the biblical movement that leads many to suspect that it is just a passing fancy or something worse.

We think that a great deal of confusion can be cleared away by carefully answering this question of newness. We would like to go into the background of the new biblical movement to show why it has come about now and not before. We would like to make it clear that there is no question of any sort of reproach to the Church in the past, for the material that has given rise to the new biblical movement could not possibly have been known before our own time. Rather,

the very fact that there is a new biblical movement is a witness to the eternal vitality of the Church and to God's providential plan for its growth. In short, the newness of the biblical movement is not a dangerous novelty gained by wanton uprooting, but the freshness of organic growth.

The modern Catholic biblical movement is the result of a grafting of the last one hundred years of scientific discovery on to the tree of Christian knowledge. In the past other grafts have been made on this tree; and each time, with proper pruning, the tree has borne ever richer fruit. In the early centuries Greco-Roman culture with its laws, ethics, organization, and philosophical imagery was grafted on to the basic teachings of the Galilean rabbi; and the result was the flowering of the Patristic period. In the Middle Ages there was a graft of Aristotelian philosophy, transmitted through the Arabic commentators; this gave its life to the splendid flowering of Thomism and the revival of the *philosophia perennis*. In the period of the Renaissance a graft from the new classical and scientific insights flowered in the great theological and spiritual advances of the counter-Reformation.

So now in the last hundred years there has been a growth in scientific knowledge unparalleled in the history of mankind; and this knowledge, too, has its role to play in the growth of Christianity. The wise men of today must bring their gifts to the God-man, as did wise men of the past. To turn our backs on this new knowledge of our times and to claim that it has nothing to offer to religion would be a denial of history, and

^{*} This is reprinted and adapted from two talks given at the Midwestern Institute of Pastoral Theology in August 1961 under the patronage of Archbishop John F. Deardon of Detroit. The talks were published in full in *Sharing the Christian Message* (Detroit: 1962).

a blasphemous confession that Christianity is dead because it can grow no longer. To fear this new knowledge and to hide from it is a denial of faith, for "the refusal to face facts in the name of piety is not the evidence of faith but of the lack of it."¹

The biblical movement is but one phase of the contribution of science to religion, but it is a very active phase. In discussing the scientific origins of the new biblical movement let us consider the contributions made in the last hundred years by language studies, by history, and by archeology to the growth of biblical knowledge.

First, language studies. It is difficult to realize today that up to one hundred years ago the Bible was really the only first hand witness to the great civilizations that preceded Greece and Rome. True, there were echoes in the Greek historians (especially in reference to Persia), in Josephus and Eusebius, but they were often badly garbled. The Bible was our chief source of knowledge of the Egyptians, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Arameans and of a host of other kingdoms that had flourished and died in the ancient Near East. And we must remember that the foreign empires figured in the Bible only incidentally, i.e., as a background for the story of God's dealings with an insignificant Semitic tribe known as the *Benê Israel*. This isolation of the Bible presented all sorts of difficulties. Many parts of the historical books remained virtually incomprehensible because of a lack of background. And for the more literary parts of the Bible, e.g., its sapiential poetry, no intelligible standards of comparison had survived from the civilizations contemporary with Israel.

Then the picture changed radically. In the first half of the nineteenth century Champollion deciphered hieroglyphics and Rawlinson deciphered (Persian) cuneiform. It took time before these decipherments could be fully used in giving us the grammar and vocabulary of the respective languages, but by the end of the century Egyptian, Babylonian and Assyrian records could be read accurately. The Bible was no longer alone in its witness to the past.

The historical contributions of these records we shall discuss later; let us mention

here just a few examples of their literary importance. The Egyptian records, for instance, give us a whole body of wisdom literature very close in concept to the wisdom literature of the Bible. In fact, it seems clear that part of the Book of Proverbs was dependent on the sayings of the Egyptian Amen-em-ope, and that there is a close parallel in Psalm 104 (103) to the Egyptian hymn to the Sun-god Aton. The Assyro-Babylonian records and those of their forerunners, the Sumerians, have given us even richer material. The Babylonian flood story (ultimately of Sumerian origin) and its hero Utnapishtim are identical in many details with the biblical story of Noah. This shows us that some of the stories of Genesis 1-11 were not the peculiar property of the Hebrews but were drawn, with modifications, from the common traditions of the Near East. The great law codes of the Sumerians and Accadians (e.g. Hammurabi) have made us realize that the Mosaic code reflected the legal traditions of neighboring peoples.

MORE DISCOVERIES

These nineteenth century linguistic discoveries were only the first in a series. More recently (1930), the discovery and decipherment of the tablets found at Ugarit have made a tremendous impact on biblical studies. When Abraham and, later Josue came into the promised land, they found a flourishing civilization, that of the Canaanites. They borrowed the language of this civilization (for Hebrew is just a Canaanite dialect) and many of its customs. But until 1930 we knew of no literary records left by the Canaanites. The decipherment of Ugaritic (ancient Canaanite written in a cuneiform alphabet) made available the poetical myths which dealt with the gods of Canaan. The language itself was of interest; for, more ancient than Hebrew, it gave us the meanings of words and constructions in Hebrew poetry which had long been forgotten. But more than that, this ancient Canaanite poetry was of basically the same form as biblical poetry; and so we now realize that the Hebrews borrowed not only their language but also their poetry and music from the Canaanites. Many expressions of the Psalms appear word for word in the Ugaritic literature, and it seems clear that some of the praises sung of Yahweh were borrowed from those once sung of Baal. None of this is

¹ Bruce Vawter, "Genesis and the College Teacher of Sacred Doctrine," *Proceedings of the Sixth Annual Convention of the Society of Catholic College Teachers of Sacred Doctrine* (1960), 81.

shocking: the God of Israel was a God of history, and the people that learned to worship Him used familiar materials in fashioning their religion, although they infused these materials with an entirely new spirit.

Even more recently than Ugarit, the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls (1947) has thrown light on the Bible. This is the first large body of Palestinian literature from the period after the Machabees and before the fall of Jerusalem (c. 130 B.C. to 68 A.D.). The Scrolls are useful in giving us an idea of the type of Hebrew and Aramaic being written in the period before and during Jesus' lifetime. For the standard books of the Hebrew Bible the Scrolls have given us a text almost one thousand years earlier than that hitherto available. For the first time we can see a deuterocanonical book like Tobit and apocryphal books like Jubilees and Enoch in their original Semitic form, without having to depend on Greek and Ethiopic translations.

The linguistic discoveries we have mentioned thus far have affected Old Testament studies (although, as well known, the Dead Sea Scrolls are of importance for New Testament background). But there have been equally important discoveries with regard to the New Testament. True, Greek was well known long before the last one hundred years. Yes, classical Greek, but not New Testament Greek. Indeed, there were scholars who thought New Testament Greek so strange that they suggested that it was a dialect peculiar to the New Testament. It was only at the end of the last century with the discovery of the Greek papyri in Egypt that there were made available some examples of the everyday (*koine*) Greek spoken in New Testament times. Here were business contracts and letters—the documents of the ordinary man written in the ordinary Greek that he spoke. This Greek, not classical Greek, was the language of the New Testament; and any modern New Testament Greek dictionary shows the great influence of the papyri on New Testament studies.

More recently the discovery of papyri fragments of New Testament books has given us Greek biblical texts hundreds of years earlier than the great codices like Vaticanus. The Rylands fragment of Jn (P⁵², published in 1935), for instance, dates to 125-150 A.D. The Bodmer papyri of Jn (P⁶⁶, published in 1956, and P⁷⁵, published in 1961) give us relatively long texts of the

Gospel from the late second century. These papyri discoveries, both in the Gospels and Epistles, are of great importance for studies of the biblical text.

All of these discoveries that we have mentioned belong to the last one hundred years, many to the last few years. The knowledge that they have supplied for interpreting and translating the Bible was not available to earlier centuries. We might remember, by way of comparison, that for the seven hundred years between the time of St. Jerome and that of the School of St. Victor (12th century) Hebrew was virtually an unknown language in the Western Church. And so we can understand how this tremendous increase of linguistic knowledge in the short period of one hundred years has produced a more rapid advance in the biblical field than all of the past centuries put together.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Secondly, we may turn now, more briefly, to the contributions of another science, that of history, to biblical knowledge. The ancient records, whose discovery we have mentioned, have filled in the background of the history of Israel and put that history on a scientific basis. Even today, a close knowledge of the history of a period enables us to determine whether a modern author is writing real history or only using historical details as a backdrop for fiction or parable. The same is true of the knowledge gained of the biblical period. What we have learned of ancient history in the last hundred years has enabled us, in part, to determine whether the author of a sacred book intended to write history or not. A knowledge of ancient records has convinced many Catholic authors that books like Jonas and Daniel were never intended as scientific history by their authors.

It might be interesting to look at a few examples of how historical discoveries have thrown light on Israel's history. The Egyptian records have clarified the Joseph story, for now we know more about the Hyksos period (17th century B.C.) in Egypt when the country was ruled by foreigners, and when a Semitic nomad like Joseph might well have made his way to power. The centralization of property attributed to Joseph in Gn 47:11-26 fits in very well with the Hyksos period. Again our knowledge of the Egyptian building activities in the delta

under the first pharaohs of the Nineteenth Dynasty (late 14th, early 13th centuries) now enables us to date the exodus under Moses to the 13th century. The complicated foreign affairs of the monarchies of Juda and Israel are only intelligible now when Egyptian, Assyrian and Babylonian documents have traced for us the struggle for power between the neighbors of Israel. Only a few years ago the annals of Nabuchodonosor were discovered, annals which enable us to pinpoint the first capture of Jerusalem to March 16, 597 B.C. For the subsequent Babylonian captivity of the Jews there have been found the actual Babylonian records dealing with the provisioning of the royal house of Juda.

We could go on and on with these historical finds that have clarified the Bible. A whole world has opened before our eyes—forgotten peoples who were previously only biblical names have come to life, like the Hittites and the Hurrians. Their customs, laws and treaties have explained details in the patriarchal narratives. Light on even such a basic thing as the Ten Commandments has been received from the categorical imperatives in Hittite treaties. There the agreement to keep certain commandments marked the signing of a covenant; just as Israel's agreement to keep God's commandments marked the Old Covenant.

And once again these historical discoveries are not confined to the Old Testament. How many times the records of the Roman Empire in Greece and Asia Minor have confirmed information given to us by Luke in Acts, information that was once doubted. Needless to say, all this historical knowledge was unavailable to previous generations. Its availability to our generation has been the backbone of the biblical movement.

Thirdly, and last of all, let us turn to the contributions of the science of archeology, a science which is itself the product of the last one hundred years. Here there is a question not only of the archeology of Egypt and Babylonia, but of the archeology of Palestine itself. Beginning in the 1890's, the archeology of Palestine has been put on a scientific basis; and, thanks to ceramic chronology, we have, independently of the Bible, the material for a history of the Holy Land and of its peoples.

The archeological discoveries pertaining to the Middle and Late Bronze periods (roughly 2100—1200 B.C.) have unfolded

before our eyes great Canaanite cities like Jericho, Bethshan, Megiddo and Hazor. The public and private buildings of the Canaanites, their temples, defenses, weapons, chariots, artefacts, are all there for us as they were in the times of the patriarchs—from the idols that Rachel hid under her saddle to the Hazor destroyed by Josue. And the discoveries go on. Only in the last ten years Jewish archeologists have traced the ancient settlements and travel routes in the Negeb, the southern desert of Israel, and thus clarified the travels of two of its ancient citizens, Abraham of Hebron and Isaac of Beersheba.

After the Canaanite period, archeology has unfolded the Iron period, Iron I being roughly contemporary with the Judges, and Iron II with the monarchy. The excavations of settlements at Megiddo and Taanach have helped fix the date of the song of Debhora, celebrating the victory at Taanach by the waters of Megiddo (Judges 5:19). Saul's unpretentious fortress has been excavated at Tell el Ful, as have Solomon's tremendous economic and military constructions throughout the land. The history of the divided monarchy has been vividly illustrated both in battle-scarred ruins and in magnificent building projects (such as those at Samaria, the capital of the northern kingdom). And its dramatic end has been spelled out in the letters excavated at Lachish where a desperate official describes the ever-tightening noose drawn by the Babylonian advance on Jerusalem.

NEW CONFIRMATION

Scarcely a detail of life as portrayed in the Bible has not been elucidated by the archeological discoveries of these last years. And this includes the New Testament period. For instance, the mention of the pool of Bethesda with its five porticoes (Jn 5:2) has been confirmed by the discovery of this pool in Jerusalem near the Sheepgate of the Temple, exactly where John said it was. Once more none of this material was available in the past, when it lay covered by the dust of centuries.

And so whether the new biblical information has come from language studies, or from history, or from archeology, there can be no question of blaming biblical scholars of earlier generations for not using it; it was not theirs to make use of. The only possible blame could be on our own generation

if we seek to ignore it because of preconceived ideas.

Nor in this catalogue of modern biblical advances do we mean to under-value the biblical insights of earlier periods, especially the theological insight which the Fathers gained from the Bible. (In fact, today's biblical scholars have revived interest in patristic exegesis.) God has always seen to it that in each period the Church profits from the Bible according to her needs. The present biblical advances are in a scientific direction which was closed to past ages but which peculiarly fits the needs of the Church today. And, naturally, from this scientific advance there has been an ever deeper theological perception of the wealth of the Bible.

* * *

The observations made thus far should explain the origins of the new biblical movement, but they do not explain why this movement has arisen so recently in Catholic circles. After all, the new Catholic movement is a product of the post-war period, after 1945. Yet, some of the scientific discoveries we have been mentioning were available before 1900. While there may have been limited Catholic use of this material before the Second War, its free employment is something recent. Why? The answer is *Divino Afflante Spiritu*.

At the end of the last century many non-Catholic scholars were using the new scientific material. Often, however, their approach was guided by rationalistic philosophy. The result, seen in such schools of biblical criticism as that of Wellhausen, was a radical and basically irreligious approach to the Bible. Often their facts were correct, e.g., Moses did not personally write the whole Pentateuch; but the interpretations were wrong, e.g., when they claimed that there was nothing Mosaic in the Pentateuch. In the same era some Catholic scholars, too, began to use the scientific material at times with splendid results, e.g., the works of Père Lagrange. Other Catholics, however, fell under the spell of the rationalists, and failed to distinguish between fact and interpretation. Their misguided steps ultimately led them into the Modernist heresy. This unhappy finale had the unfortunate extraneous result of casting an aura of suspicion on attempts to employ modern scientific material in biblical research. Thus, in the years between 1910 and 1940 Catholic biblical re-

search continued to feel the impact of the Modernist troubles.

Then in 1943 came the encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu* and its re-direction of Catholic biblical studies. Pope Pius XII praised the type of scientific discoveries of which we have been speaking (No. 11).² He pointed out that, while the criticism at the beginning of the century had misinterpreted this material, biblical science was now much more secure (No. 18). And so the Pope ordered Catholic scholars to go ahead and use the new scientific material in interpreting and translating the Bible (No. 15, No. 16, No. 19). Particularly in the field of translation he insisted that Catholics should no longer confine themselves to the Vulgate but should use the original Hebrew and Greek.³

The Pope's encyclical implied a radical change in the Catholic approach to Scripture. Naturally time was required for its commands to be put into effect, and so it is that only in the 1950's has the new Catholic biblical movement been set in motion. Part of the glory of this new movement is that it has sprung up under Church auspices, and that some of its leaders are found on such eminent Catholic faculties as that of the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome and the magnificent Dominican School of St. Stephen in Jerusalem.

FACT AND INTERPRETATION

Before we close this explanation of the "newness" of the new Catholic biblical movement, we might add a few remarks to assure any who may have felt uneasy about the movement. Sometimes the term "Modernism" is used by the adversaries of the movement; and more than one opponent has triumphantly remarked of some idea expressed by a biblical scholar: "That is just what the Modernists said." As we have pointed out, the Modernists did make use of some scientific facts which they interpreted wrongly. The fact that a modern Catholic biblical scholar will occasionally accept some fact that the Modernists accepted fifty years ago proves nothing regard-

² All paragraph (No.) references are to the edition of the encyclical in *Rome and the Study of Scripture* (St. Meinrad: Grail, 4th ed., 1946).

³ We are now receiving the fruit of this wise counsel in such Catholic translations as the Bible of Jerusalem (French) and the American Confraternity translation of the Old Testament. (The Confraternity New Testament was made before the encyclical and is from the Vulgate. A new Confraternity New Testament from the Greek is in preparation.)

ing his heterodoxy. The important question is how does he interpret his facts. And you can be sure that the erroneous and heretical presuppositions that were the backbone of Modernism are held by no modern Catholic biblical scholar. It is interesting to take a problem like the first eleven chapters of Genesis and compare the modern Catholic views with the errors of Loisy and those of his predecessors, like Wellhausen. Starting from the same facts, the two groups arrive at totally different interpretations. Above all, the modern Catholic biblical scholars submit their opinions to the Church's teaching authority, something that was anathema to the Modernists. And so the charge of resembling Modernism is based purely on appearances and lacks any foundation in fact.

We stress, too, that the Church *continues* to encourage the biblical movement. The Pontifical Biblical Commission was set up to watch over Catholic biblical studies and insure their safety (*Vigilantiae* of Leo XIII, 1902). It has been regarded as the upholder of very conservative positions. Yet, in face of the new biblical movement, the secretary of the Biblical Commission stated that Catholic biblical scholars now have "full liberty" in investigating matters touched on by the past decrees of the Commission, except where there is a question of faith or morals.⁴ Thus, on such points as the unity of a biblical book or its authorship, Catholic scholars now enjoy much greater liberty. This is why many Catholics now freely hold such views as the existence of deutero-Isaia, the priority of Mark, etc., even though there are past decrees of the Commission to the contrary.

All well and good, it may be answered, but have not Catholic scholars gone too far? What about the recent Roman *monitum* (Holy Office, June 20, 1961)? It is unfortunate that this *monitum* was so poorly presented in much of the Catholic press as if it were a warning to biblical scholars alone.⁵ Many newspapers did not even stress that the *monitum* opens with *praise* for the

fervor of today's biblical studies. And, again, if one reads the *monitum*, one will find that it is directed, not to biblical scholars alone or as such, but to all "who deal with the Sacred Books whether in writing or speaking." The special target of the *monitum* is the "circulation of opinions which endanger the genuine historical and objective truth of Sacred Scripture." The *monitum* is most anxious that such opinions be not allowed to disturb the faithful. Thus it would seem that the *monitum* is directed principally against popularizations which are transmitting dangerous and, often, garbled opinions to the faithful. Undoubtedly there are scholars (few, we hope) who have been imprudent; but a real and, perhaps, greater danger flows from the overzealous popularizers—seminarians who have not understood their professors, or who exaggerate one aspect of the professor's teaching; young priests with a desire to shock parishioners or older pastors; educated laity with a desire to laud it over a poorly informed priest. Yet, these are a hazard in any Church movement whether it be liturgical, catechetical, social, or biblical, and are part of its growing pains.

RESPONSIBLE CRITICISM

Catholic biblical scholars have long been conscious of this danger of incorrect generalizing and over-zealous popularizing, and are only too happy to have it pointed out clearly by the Holy Office. They are especially grateful for the very cautious wording of the *monitum* which shows that the Holy Office is quite sensitive to the views of this biblical movement whose fervor it praises and has no desire to crush them. Notice that what is condemned are opinions that endanger the *genuine* (or "proper"—*germanam*) historical truth of Scripture. As Fr. Fitzmyer⁶ has pointed out, this is an implicit reference to different literary forms, each having its own purpose and standards of historical truth. (This is the very doctrine that was the key teaching of *Divino Afflante Spiritu*, No. 35-39.) Thus there is no sign that the *monitum* was designed to reverse the biblical movement or to return to the days before the encyclical when some treated the

⁴ The text is published in the *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 18 (1956), 23-29.

⁵ We recommend highly "The Wayward Press," by Bruce Vawter, C.M., in *America* (Aug. 5, 1961) which shows how poorly the press has handled the *monitum*. He says (p. 592): "That a paternal admonition such as that of the 20th of June should be willfully or unthinkingly distorted into a cease-and-desist order against the biblical movement is the worst thing that could happen to the cause of Catholic truth."

⁶ "A Recent Roman Scriptural Controversy," *Theological Studies* 22 (1961), 444. He cites Cardinal Bea's dictum: "Sua cuique generi literario est veritas"—Every literary form has its own truth. This article is essential for an understanding of the opposition to scriptural studies today.

whole Bible, outside of the Sapiential Books, as if it were 19th century scientific history written by moderns.

The Holy Office has done us the service of pointing out one danger that faces the biblical movement; we would close by pointing out another very real danger. There is a danger from irresponsible criticism of the biblical movement, a criticism not based on a careful reading of the solid articles and books written by Scripture scholars, a criticism that does not distinguish between what is really held by these scholars and exaggerated reports and rumors. Such criticism may create a type of hysteria which would do real damage to the biblical movement. Naturally, if at any moment the Holy See or legitimate Church authority would ever feel that any Catholic movement is dangerous, we would all want it stopped. But the Holy See has encouraged the biblical movement—a fact that such criticism is neglecting. And when the Holy See does wish to administer a warning to a movement, it does so characteristically in a paternal and carefully worded document such as the *monitum*; it does not indulge in careless charges.

The biblical movement has greatly interested large numbers of the Catholic laity in the Bible, as the tremendous sale of the Pamphlet *Guide to the New Testament* (Liturgical Press) has shown. Catholic biblical articles and books are being received with real appreciation and interest in non-Catholic circles, for non-Catholic scholars recognize that Catholics are using the latest scientific data (thanks to *Divino Afflante Spiritu*) and are holding positions that are scientifically tenable. This has done a great deal to forward the ecumenical spirit in which Pope John is so personally interested. Careless and unsubstantiated criticism must not be allowed to deprive the Church of such benefits gained from the modern biblical movement. Let us hope that if the *monitum* of the Holy Office puts an end to irresponsible popularization of the Bible, it will also put an end to such irresponsible criticism which, in its own way, also disturbs the consciences of the faithful and does real damage to the Catholic faith.

We hope that our remarks have made it clear why there is a certain "newness" about the Catholic biblical movement today. We firmly believe that with the proper precautions this biblical movement can make a tremendous contribution toward the growth

of the Church in our times precisely because it is a logical development of our times. Can we fail to see the workings of the Holy Spirit in this movement which holds as its magna carta the encyclical of a great and saintly Pope?

RAYMOND E. BROWN, S.S.
St. Mary's Seminary
Roland Park, Baltimore

POSTSCRIPT: In the encyclical (No. 47) we have so often referred to, Pope Pius XII gave all Catholic scholars a norm according to which they should judge the efforts of biblical scholars: "Let all the other sons of the Church bear in mind that the efforts of these resolute laborers in the vineyard of the Lord should be judged not only with equity and justice, but also with the greatest charity; all moreover should abhor that intemperate zeal which imagines that whatever is new should for that very reason be opposed and suspected." A year has passed since we gave the talks at Detroit which have been reprinted in part and adapted for this article. In that year there has appeared in some of the Catholic magazines of our country a rather acrimonious discussion pertaining to modern Catholic biblical studies. Personally we regard any bitterness on this subject as unfortunate, and yearn for the implementation of the command of the Pope which we have just quoted. We offer this article as a gesture of peace that it may help to relieve honest fear or misunderstanding about the intentions of biblical scholars.

We are on the eve of an ecumenical council. There may be some opponents of the biblical movement who look toward this council with the hope that it will bring some sort of disciplinary action against modern biblical ideas. However, rather than approaching this great council of unity with partisan ideas, might we not suggest a biblical test for the biblical movement. When Christianity first began in Jerusalem, many of the authorities suspected its newness and were all for crushing it. But at the great council of the Sanhedrin recorded in Acts 5, the great and wise Gamaliel warned these zealots: "Take care what you do with these men . . . let them alone, for if this plan or this undertaking is of men, it will fail;

but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them." His wise advice saved the nascent Christian Church in Jerusalem from extinction. A similar wisdom adopted by the opponents of the biblical movement

today would save for the Church what is truly worthwhile in a movement that has had so little time to grow and yet already gives promise of great fruit.

■ ■ ■

The Call to Conversion

Is it not very much to the point to recall the essential character of faith? To remind ourselves that it is a free and humble submission of the mind made in obscurity? So easy under the pressure from unbelief unwittingly to forget this and go forth to meet the unbelieving mind on its own terms instead of calling it to conversion. The incessant labor of taking up individual objections and removing misunderstanding must always continue, but the primary requirement for the genesis of faith is the integral proclamation of the Christian message. Argument has its place, but fundamentally men are offered faith, not argued into it.

Valuable study has been done in recent years on the nature and structure of the Christian message. This can help us in our task. What is the core of the Christian message, its central theme? What should be the characteristics of that missionary proclamation of the Gospel that calls men to faith and gives rise to faith?

The Christian message can be described briefly as the proclamation of the salvation wrought by God in Christ and offered to all men who repent and believe. The word "proclamation" is used deliberately: the announcement of the Good News must resound, be public, solemn and dynamic. When it proclaims the salvation wrought by God, it is proclaiming an event, a history. The Christian message is not only a body of truths and precepts but also the telling of a history. The preacher makes known the mighty deeds of God, His actions for men, and unfolds the history of salvation in

which God reveals Himself as Lord, Savior, and Father.

But the salvation was wrought in Christ. All this history is centered in Christ, and so is the message. It is the proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ. It announces the salvation, the new order, brought about by the death and resurrection of Christ. Centered on Christ, its heart is His paschal mystery. The salvation is offered to all men who repent and believe.

The message is essentially a call to conversion. It tells sinners of their salvation and calls upon them to put away their sins and be converted. They must repent and believe. Such is the basic proclamation that gives rise to faith. When it is placed before men by the ministers of the Gospel, it is not a merely human utterance. Christ is the author of it, not merely its theme. When the message of Christ is preached, it carries with it the power of His Spirit to move and change the hearts of men.

Christ relies on men for the spreading of His Gospel. The Christian revelation, though illuminated for the soul by grace, must be presented from without. Within its content it already has signs of its divine value, but if its presentation is to be adequate, it must be accompanied by some manifestation of divine and supernatural life in its witnesses. What is offered is not mere abstract teaching but a message of salvation. How can this be delivered effectively, if its bearers show no sign in themselves of the new life they proclaim? What God offers to man in revelation is holiness: a union with Him as He is in Himself, a share in what is proper to God; and that holiness comes not only as a gift but also as a deliverance to sinful man. The offer

From "Faith, Reason and the Gospels." Edited by John J. Heany, S.J. The Newman Press. This excerpt is from Chapter One, "Faith and Reason" by Charles Davis.

finds expression in the lives of His witnesses as well as in their words; otherwise it would be but half-made.

We are often too facile in attributing a sense of emptiness, frustration and restlessness to unbelievers. Experience should teach us caution; many, perhaps an increasing number, feel quite satisfied and content with what this world with its achievements has to offer. The fact is that the revelation of man's inadequacy and sinfulness is correlative to the revelation of what is offered him by God's gratuitous love. That must be proclaimed by preaching; it must be shown forth by Christian lives. If the present situation demands the ceaseless presentation of the Christian message, it demands just as imperiously Christian holiness. That

Christian lives are no different from others is an unanswerable objection—at least it can only be answered by pointing to Christian lives that are.

At that time Jesus said openly, Father, who art Lord of heaven and earth, I give thee praise that thou hast hidden all this from the wise and the prudent, and revealed it to little children (Matt. 11:25). A well-used text, but still relevant. It summarizes all that has been said. Humility and simplicity are required for faith; this is inescapably a surrender of the mind to God, in which a man goes beyond what his own mind assures to rely in darkness on divine truths. The paradox is that nothing is lost but all is gained.

■ ■ ■

Explaining the Mass

1. The parish Mass is the assembly of the people of God; the family of Christ gathers together for the worship of God. This above all is the designation by which the congregation must come to know themselves.

2. In this assembly of the people of God, the congregation must be brought to distinguish clearly the different but complementary roles of *Christ*, the *priest*, and the *people*.

Christ, the invisible priest—who re-enacts His great redemptive self-surrender to the Father in our midst, drawing us into this sacrifice so that we become with Him offered and offering. Christ's visible priest—who has been chosen by Christ and His Church through Holy Orders to be Christ's instrument in re-enacting on the altar Christ's sacrificial surrender to His Father. Christ's priestly people—who have been given the power by Christ and the Church through *Baptism* and *Confirmation* to offer in thanksgiving the sacrifice of Mass with Christ and at the hands of His priest. This designation is a right, a privilege, and an obligation of the Christian community and of every individual that makes it up.

3. In the action of the holy Mass the con-

gregation must likewise be brought to distinguish the parts of the Mass as indicated in the outline. There are three main parts: the *Scripture Reading*, the *Sacrifice*, and the *Sacrificial Meal* or *Communion*. The entrance and dismissal rites must be properly understood as introduction and conclusion to the three main parts of the Mass.

4. Over a period of time and with much repetition, the entire action of holy Mass can perhaps be best presented as an epitome of the entire relation of the Father to His children through Christ—an exchange of love.

a. The Scripture Reading is really God's revelation to His people here and now, and apart from its actual content is a symbolic recounting of all the Father's great gifts to man beginning with creation and culminating in Christ. The Scripture Reading, then in a very real sense, is the Father pouring out His love and gifts upon His family. And the creed that follows is our immediate grateful response to this love, a recounting with gratitude of the benefits the Father has bestowed upon us.

b. The Sacrifice, or the second part of the

From "Holy Mass, the Great Action of the Christian Community." Published by The World Library of Sacred Music, Cincinnati, Ohio. (14c each. \$13 per 100 copies.)

Mass, however, is the really important response of the people of God to the Father's love, because in it Christ offers Himself, Christ offers His Church, the Church—priest and people—offer Christ, in a great thanksgiving to the Father.

c. The Communion, or the sacrificial meal, is again the loving action of the Father toward His people. The Father has accepted the gift his people have given Him—Christ. Now in renewed love He offers that gift back to his people as the food of their divine life (The notion of communion as food cannot be too much emphasized; it lies at the very heart of the traditional doctrine of the Eucharist. In our day it is not stressed nearly enough.) This divine food nourishes in the people of God divine life, and draws them into the unity of the mystical body, making them ever more and more one with another in Christ.

d. After the communion or the sacrificial meal comes the thanksgiving of the people, which must extend out into the lives of all present. Daily living is the most constant

and renewed thanksgiving that we can make for the great love and the gifts of the heavenly Father. Each effort at Christian living becomes Eucharistic, in that it becomes another thanks-offering of self through Christ to the Father. It is in this way that we live the Mass, live the Eucharist, live thanksgiving in Christ.

e. And all this magnificent interchange of love takes place only for what will be finally the great and final gift of the Father to all His children, that for which He called them in the beginning—life with Him in heaven, communion of the Father and His children forever, through Christ, consummated by the Holy Spirit.

5. These are the most important notions that need stressing if we are to make our congregation a truly Christian community. The ideas here are only suggestive, of course, and there is a wealth more that will be available to each priest as he contemplates the mystery of Christ which he is sent to preach to his people.

■ ■ ■

READING I'VE LIKED

Looking for a short book on the Church which reflects the best recent scholarship yet in attractive, readable style? Then you'll appreciate *God's Own People*, by Father Frank Norris, S.S. (Helicon Press.) \$2.95. In the framework of Salvation History, he treats the Church promised, the many-sided aspects of the Mystical Body, and the visible, hierarchical institution.

After the defeat of Hitler's Germany, Father Michael Schmaus—one of Germany's ablest theologians—delivered a series of lectures to an audience from the faculties of the University of Munich. In a climate of hopelessness, he spoke of the enduring Christian message as the only satisfactory explanation of life and the foundation of genuine hope. These lectures are available in *The Essence of Christianity* (Scepter Press, Chicago). No teacher of Christian Doctrine should neglect this unusual synthesis of Christian teaching.

Father Ralph J. Friedrich in *A Biblical Time-Line* has provided excellent teaching aids on the details of Salvation History. Desk model (10 or more 50c each). Five large cards (\$10 per set). Highly recommended. Postal Church Service, Youngstown, Ohio.

GUIDE

- Official publication of the *Paulist Institute for Religious Research*.
- Officers: John J. Keating, C.S.P., *Director*. George C. Hagmaier, C.S.P., *Associate Director*. Editor of *Guide*, John T. McGinn, C.S.P.
- Concerned with the theoretical and practical aspects of the Apostolate to non-Catholics.
- Published 10 times a year (monthly except for combined issues in June-July and in August-September).
- Annual subscription \$1.00. Single issues 10¢. Bulk lots to seminarians at 5¢ a copy.

GUIDE

411 West 59th Street
New York 19, New York

Guide Lights

CASING THE COUNCIL . . .

In the argot of the underworld casing has a somewhat sinister connotation. It is preliminary to a well-planned crime. In what, however, we modestly consider more respectable quarters, we are using the term as a title for some general observations on the 21st Ecumenical Council which convenes this month.

The decision to hold it was, to all appearances, a sudden one. Roman rumor is as well known as Roman fever, but no previous report prepared the Church for the historic announcement. Even when it was made, it was almost casual. It came at the conclusion of the traditional ceremonies at St. Paul Outside the Walls on January 25, 1959. The Vatican Press Service published it in a terse statement linking it with two other projects, a diocesan synod for Rome, and a review of the Code of Canon Law.

The full significance of a General Council was not immediately grasped by the secular press. A few of the first reports left the impression that the practitioners of the Fourth Estate saw it as a more or less important ecclesiastical gathering similar to a Lambeth Conference. Some hurried research soon revealed the remarkable nature and relative infrequency of the announced event. It was discovered that such councils had been called in the past only to meet some dire emergencies, to shore up the Church against schisms and heresies.

It was then assumed that there must be some startling purpose for this assembly. It was found in the Vatican Press release which said: "As regards the ecumenical council, it is the intention of the Holy Father that the aim should not be only for the spiritual good of Christian people, but also to invite the separated communities to seek again that unity for which so many souls are longing in these days throughout the world."

Here was a note that even the most benighted scribbler should understand, the note of unity. Some understood it not wisely, but too well. The Pope was going to get everyone together to discuss unity. It would be a rematch of Cajetan and Luther with new ground rules permeated with politeness. Enthusiastic dispatches were filled with the vocabulary of ecumenism. Optimism, only faintly punctuated with pessimism, was articulated within this framework of unity.

Even though it was made clear to all in short order that the council would not be

inter-credal, but would be an assembly of Catholic Bishops, many reports and articles continued to confuse the Ecumenical Council and the ecumenical movement. It became necessary for several highly placed churchmen to insist that this gathering would not be directly concerned with unity, but with internal conditions of the Church. In fact, there arose a developing trend to actively play down the unity theme which had initially captured men's minds.

This trend led to a lessening of interest on the part of some outside the Church, and it provoked cautious public statements from a few Protestant leaders. They began to echo the Catholic spokesmen as they warned their people that the council's contribution to unity would not be direct and compelling. Yet, the image of a united Christendom fades slowly once it has been impressed in the mind. Perhaps it is reinforced by a universal Christian conscience. Whatever the reason, the conservative reaction may have tempered optimism, but it failed to uproot hope. And hope remains vocal. To the mass of men who think about it at all, this council is the Council of Unity.

TIERS AND TRIBUNES . . .

The vision of unity spurred by the council is not checked by the exclusiveness of its accredited members. They occupy the tiers in the nave, and they speak with the authority of their episcopal rank, but no one is forgetful that above and behind them are the tribunes or galleries with their observer-delegates from Protestant and Orthodox Churches. Here is a sign of the unity men seek and a symbol of the sincerity of their search.

Among those present will be delegates from the World Presbyterian Alliance, the World Methodist Council, the International Convention of Christian Churches, the International Congregational Council, the Lutheran World Federation, the Anglican Communion, and the World Council of Churches. Apart from these observer-delegates, there will also be a number of non-Catholic religion experts invited as special guests.

It is true that these observers and guests will take no active part in the council, but they may still be heard. They will be admitted to both general congregations and formal meetings. Their very presence will not be without influence. Furthermore, they will be encouraged to make their ideas and

suggestions known to the Secretariat for Unity, which in turn can send them on to the appropriate commissions. Therefore, as Cardinal Bea pointed out, they can, in some sense, "take part" in the deliberations of the council.

SCENE ON THE SEINE . . .

The tribunes, or a reasonable facsimile, have been conspicuously present in some non-Catholic assemblies. Last November the Vatican appointed official observers for the first time to attend the World Council of Churches meeting in New Delhi. Last August it again appointed two official observers for the important meeting of the Central Committee of the World Council meeting in Paris. One was Father Jerome Hamer, a French Dominican, well-known for his ecumenical work. The other was Father John B. Sheerin of the Paulist Fathers, editor of *The Catholic World*. Father Sheerin had previously been an unofficial observer at a Faith and Order Meeting in Oberlin, Ohio.

The admission of the Russian Orthodox Church into the Council at New Delhi swelled the representation of Orthodox on the Central Committee, which is composed of one hundred members. There is much speculation about the meaning this influential block will have in the World Council. It should serve as a deterrent to the diminution of Catholic attitudes.

One important question before the Committee was the invitation to send observers to the Vatican Council. Some thought that the Russians would be opposed, but the vote was unanimously in favor. The General Secretary, W. A. Visser 't Hooft, qualified the move when he said: "We seek to be well informed about each other and let each other know about our various concerns. There is no question of any negotiation about organizational links, and of course even less (since this is clearly forbidden by our constitution) of the World Council acting for any or all of its members in this relationship."

SCENE AT SEATTLE . . .

The North American Liturgical Week was held this year on the grounds of the Seattle World's Fair. The theme was: "Thy Kingdom Come: Christian Hope in a Modern World." Recurrent mention was made of the use of English in the Mass and the administration of the sacraments, not as an end in itself, but as a means by which Catholics might be drawn closer to an understanding and a vital community in the liturgical life of the Church.

A growing emphasis on dialogue between various Christian religions was mirrored prominently in the attitude of many speakers. Father Godfrey Diekmann, O.S.B., editor of *Worship*, noted the collaboration, halting but hopeful, of non-Catholic and Catholic scholars, particularly scriptural and liturgical. Facilities to make non-Catholic observers welcome were provided in a special room where Legion of Mary members were on hand to answer questions and display books and pamphlets concerning moves toward unity within the Church.

Archbishop Connolly in his address of welcome cited the panorama of space-age exhibits at the Fair, and he said: "We cannot remain neutral and on the sidelines as we view the changes taking place in the world, or be concerned only with our own salvation. We must transform this modern world into the kingdom of God . . . in preparation for His return."

CASTIGATING CALUMNY . . .

In the Christian century Dean M. Kelley of the National Council of Churches reviewed Emmett McLoughlin's latest literary offering. He had harsh words for the People's Padre. He said: "McLoughlin's experiences in that church and his traumatic break with it have left him embittered, and his resentment pours forth here as in his previous books. . . . Rather than gaining release from his anger in his writing, however, he seems to grow more vindictive with each book, so that what should have been a private therapy for him becomes a reinforcement for the Know-Nothings of this latter day." "This work is simply a denunciation of the Roman Catholic Church on the basis of extreme cases, which the author says are a representative sample of the whole. When even true reports are used to degrade or discredit an entire class or group, the result is calumny, and that is what this book amounts to. It cannot conceivably benefit the Church of Christ, Roman Catholic or Protestant. It is hard to see how it can benefit anyone but the author and the publisher. Let us hope that the benefit of this scandal-mongering will be minimal to them."

SEMINARIANS . . .

Bulk lots of GUIDE are mailed monthly to seminarians all over the country at 5c a copy. One student is responsible for ordering and distribution of the required number of copies. We'll be happy to make the same arrangement with others who care to follow the same plan.

JOHN J. KEATING, C.S.P.

PAULIST



PRESS

THE HISTORY OF SALVATION

Leonard Johnston

WHAT IS GOD LIKE?

J. Edgar Bruns

GOD IS FAITHFUL

Mother Kathryn Sullivan, R.S.C.J.

THE HOPE OF ISRAEL

Frederick L. Moriarty, S.J.

THE TRINITY

Gerard S. Sloyan

THE PERSON OF CHRIST

Wilfred F. Dewan, C.S.P.

PASSION, DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

Myles M. Bourke

THE CHURCH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Thomas L. Sheridan, S.J.

THE SACRAMENTS—Signs of Christ, Sanctifier and High Priest

Edward J. Kilmartin, S.J.

BAPTISM

Ignatius Hunt, O.S.B.

PENANCE

Thomas M. Finn, C.S.P.

THE EUCHARIST

Neal M. Flanagan, O.S.M.

CONFIRMATION: GIFT OF THE SPIRIT

Mother Marian Bohen, O.S.U.

EXTREME UNCTION

Joseph E. Krause

HOLY ORDERS

John J. Connolly

CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

J. Richard Quinn

LIFE IN CHRIST

Barnabas Mary Ahern, C.P.

THE MOTHER OF CHRIST

Eamon R. Carroll, O.Carm.

MORALITY AND THE LOVE OF GOD

Charles Curran

THE MASS AND THE LAITY

Frederick R. McManus

WHAT IS THE LITURGY?

Joseph V. Gallagher, C.S.P.

WHAT IS FAITH?

Joseph Cahill, S.J.

PRAYER

James C. Turro

DEATH FOR A CHRISTIAN

Stanley B. Marrow, S.J.

THE CHRISTIAN IN THE MODERN WORLD

Robert G. Hoyt

15c EACH



PAULIST PRESS

180 Varick Street, New York 14, N. Y.



THE GOOD NEWS OF CHRIST

WHAT IT IS

24 full-color film strips, each with a study guide and a 33-1/3 rpm. vinylite recording (12 minutes); in 4 parts of 6 film strips each, with 3 records in each part, packaged in an attractive durable box for storing or shelving. These film strips are rich in doctrine, artistic in production, and kerymatic in approach.

WHAT IT IS FOR

Today Catholic instructors are turning to the Bible and to liturgy for a concrete presentation of Catholic doctrine. These film strips facilitate this biblical and liturgical teaching of religion. They have been endorsed by convert instructors . . . and may also be used for societies, clubs and schools.

WHAT IT COSTS

Each part costs \$60. The total cost for all four parts is \$240. A good part of this expense can be defrayed by taking a silver collection at showings for societies and clubs. Some instructors have paid for visual aids by a limited number of direct appeals.

TEN DAY FREE TRIAL SEND COUPON BELOW

Please send **THE GOOD NEWS OF CHRIST** as checked below, and bill me. I understand that if I am not fully satisfied, I may return this material to you within 10 days and owe you nothing.

(Check below)

<input type="checkbox"/> Complete set	\$240.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Part 1. The Hidden Life of Christ	65.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Part 2. The Public Life of Christ	65.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Part 3. The Public Life of Christ	65.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Part 4. The Redemption Fulfilled	65.00